United Nations E/CN.5/2017/4

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
22 November 2016

Original: English

Commission for Social Development
Fifty-fifth session
1-10 February 2017
Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

Mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-fifth session, a report on the implementation of that resolution, including the Chair's summary of the discussions and the proposals made during the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the Commission's fifty-fourth session. The report provides an overview of the inclusion of disability in existing international development frameworks, as well as of the status of persons with disabilities in social and economic development. It notes that, worldwide, persons with disabilities are still at a disadvantage in many aspects of their participation in development processes, mechanisms and institutions. The report presents the information concerning: (a) the review and follow-up mechanisms of relevant international frameworks on disability-inclusive development; (b) the role of the Commission for Social Development in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda; (c) summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability held at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development; and (d) conclusions and recommendations.

16-20613 (E) 011216

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, "Promoting the rights of persons with disabilities and strengthening the mainstreaming of disability in the post-2015 development agenda", in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission for Social Development, at its fifty-fifth session, a report on the implementation of resolution 2015/4, integrating the Chair's summary of the discussions and the proposals made during the multi-stakeholder panel discussion held during the Commission's fifty-fourth session.

2. Persons with disabilities still face marginalization and significant barriers to their inclusion and participation in society and in development. The extent of inequalities experienced by persons with disabilities in all areas of development is often the result of shortcomings in the structural, social, political and cultural environments in which they reside, including lack of accessibility of physical and virtual environments; institutional barriers; discrimination; exclusion; and unequal opportunities.

3. In order to address these challenges, the United Nations has reinforced its commitment to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in a series of international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[1] which codified universal human rights and inclusive development from the disability perspective.

4. Building on the decades of work carried out by the United Nations, disability is now clearly recognized as a cross-cutting development issue on the global agenda. This is evidenced by the hosting, in New York in 2013, of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the realization of the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities: the way forward, a disability-inclusive development agenda towards 2015 and beyond, and its outcome document,[2] as well as the subsequent recognition and commitment to the specific needs of persons with disabilities in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda[4] and other recently adopted development frameworks in the fields of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action, financing for development and urban development.

5. The Commission for Social Development has played a principal role in mainstreaming disability into the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, both through its annual consideration of the social situation of persons with disabilities and through the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development from 1994 to 2014.[5] In view of the urgent need to ensure that disability is effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of 2030 Agenda, and in light of the expiration of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, the Commission, at its fifty-third and fifty-fourth sessions, considered the

[1] General Assembly resolution 61/106, annex I.
[2] General Assembly resolution 68/3.
[3] General Assembly resolution 70/1.
[4] General Assembly resolution 69/313, annex.
[5] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex, sect. IV, para. 2.

possibility and modalities for another monitoring mechanism to further strengthen the mainstreaming of disability in development.

6. The present report presents existing international frameworks on disability-inclusive development and their reviews and follow-up mechanisms. It explains the history and the evolution of the role of the Commission for Social Development in mainstreaming disability in the development agenda and provides a summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In this context, the report makes recommendations for effectively mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals and provides options with regard to an appropriate complementary follow-up and review mechanism, taking into account existing intergovernmental mechanisms and processes.

II. Existing frameworks guiding the inclusion of disability in development

7. The concept and practice of including disability in development has gained, and continues to gain, increasing attention worldwide. Key frameworks adopted by the General Assembly in advancing disability-inclusive development include the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted in 1982,[3] the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993),[4] and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).

8. In addition, recent international development frameworks incorporate the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities. The United Nations development agenda, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,[5] the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the New Urban Agenda,[6] further define the pathway to ensuring the inclusion of disability in efforts to achieve the development goals. The inclusion of disability in these major frameworks is described below.

9. The purpose of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, adopted by the General Assembly in 1982, was to promote effective measures for the prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the realization of the goals of "full participation" of persons with disabilities in social life and development, and of "equality", which means opportunities equal to those of the whole population and an equal share in the improvement in living conditions resulting from social and economic development.

10. In 1993, the General Assembly adopted the 22 Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, which provide a framework for the further implementation of the goals of equality and full

[3] See General Assembly resolution 37/52.
[4] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex.
[5] General Assembly resolution 69/283, annex II.
[6] See A/CONF.226/4, annex.

participation of persons with disabilities in social life and development, as set forth in the World Programme of Action.

11. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the General Assembly in 2006, is an instrument for inclusive development, promoting the universal human rights of persons with disabilities from the disability perspective.

12. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects the needs of persons with disabilities and commits Member States to ensuring their inclusion and participation in society. In particular, the Sustainable Development Goals explicitly take persons with disabilities and the inclusion of disability into account under seven targets. These targets address access to education and employment; availability of schools that are sensitive and responsive to students with disabilities; the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities; accessible transport, as well as accessible public and green spaces; and building the capacity of countries to collect disaggregated data by disability. Moreover, the 2030 Agenda commits Member States to providing persons with disabilities with access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to be able to take advantage of opportunities and to participate fully in society. In addition, the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals calls for data disaggregation by disability, where relevant, and includes 11 indicators that refer explicitly to disability. These indicators focus on: social protection; disparities in education; schools with adapted infrastructure and materials for students with disabilities; earnings by employed persons with disabilities; persons with disabilities living at income levels below the 50 per cent median income level; access to convenient public transport and public open spaces; physical and sexual harassment; representation in public institutions; and inclusive decision-making.

13. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also includes explicit references to persons with disabilities and disability, in particular, by committing Members States to providing social protection to persons with disabilities; encouraging the full participation of persons with disabilities in the labour market; delivering quality education to all by reaching children with disabilities; upgrading education facilities that are disability sensitive; facilitating accessible technology for persons with disabilities; and increasing the collection and use of data disaggregated by disability.

14. The Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in 2015, adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which recognizes persons with disabilities as a group whose active participation, involvement and contribution of expertise in disaster preparedness optimizes the resilience and the chances of survival of persons with disabilities in disasters. The Framework further sets out principles of universal design and accessibility in all aspects of disaster risk mitigation and preparedness, and calls for universally accessible responses. The Sendai Framework represents a milestone in the advancement of disability-inclusive measures in international instruments.

15. The New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016, promotes measures and policies to enhance the inclusion and

participation of persons with disabilities in cities and urban settlements. In particular, it promotes: (a) housing policies, road safety as well as basic physical and social infrastructure that focus on the needs of persons with disabilities; (b) employment with attention to the needs and potential of persons with disabilities and (c) information and communications technologies that are accessible for persons with disabilities. The Agenda also calls for the collection of data disaggregated by disability.

16. The first World Humanitarian Summit, held in 2016, included a special session on the inclusion of persons with disabilities into humanitarian action, in which stakeholders, including some participating Member States, launched the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action.[10] The Charter underscored the international commitment to integrating the rights and perspectives of persons with disabilities in all aspects and stages of humanitarian responses. In particular, the Charter commits to non-discrimination, participation of persons with disabilities, inclusive response and services and cooperation and coordination among all development and humanitarian actors.

III. The status of persons with disabilities in social and economic development

17. Poverty is more common among persons with disabilities. A study analysing the prevalence of disability among poor households in 15 developing countries found that the economic situation of households that had at least one member with a disability was worse than that of households without any person with a disability.[11] In a separate study, in 18 of 21 States that are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), working-age people with disabilities showed higher poverty rates (defined as less than 60 per cent of the median-adjusted disposable income) than those without disabilities. On average, across OECD countries, the income of persons with disabilities was 12 per cent lower than the national average, and as much as 20 to 30 per cent lower in some OECD member States.[12] In addition to lower incomes, persons with disabilities often face extra costs associated with disability, including costs associated with assistive devices, personal support, transportation and housing needs, making it even more likely to be exposed to poverty.

18. Working-age persons with disabilities are less likely to be employed than their non-disabled peers. In 50 countries surveyed for the *World Report on Disability*,[13] the overall employment rate among persons with disabilities was about 10 percentage points lower than the rate among persons without disabilities. In OECD countries, employment rates for persons with disabilities have been found to

[10] See http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org.

[11] Sophie Mitra, Aleksandra Posarac and Brandon Vick, "Disability and poverty in developing countries: a snapshot from the World Health Survey", Social Protection and Labour Discussion Paper, No. 1109 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2011).

[12] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Sickness, disability and work: keeping on track in the economic downturn", background paper for the High-level Forum, Stockholm, 14 and 15 May 2009.

[13] World Health Organization and World Bank, *World report on disability* (Geneva, 2011).

be half of those for persons without disabilities.[12] Persons with disabilities are often discouraged from looking for a job. For those who look for work, employment opportunities are scarce, owing to inaccessible workplaces and information, discrimination and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities, and misconceptions about their capacity to work. Due to the lack of opportunities for wage employment for people with disabilities, they are often obliged to generate income though their own enterprises.[14] In a study of 16 developing countries, self-employment rates tended to be higher for persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities.[15] Self-employed workers tend to be in more vulnerable situations, as they are more likely to experience sudden unemployment or underemployment, and to lack basic social security.

19. When employed, people with disabilities are more likely to be in part-time jobs. A 2010 study in 29 countries showed that the percentage of part-time employees among employed persons with disabilities was higher than for their non-disabled peers in all countries.[15] Disabled persons are often restricted to part-time employment because existing options for full time employment do not give them sufficient time to travel to and from work or to deal with health concerns. However, people with disabilities can take part in in full time work if reasonable accommodations at the workplace, and for transport to the workplace, are available. Persons with disabilities are also more likely to be in low-paid jobs with poor career prospects and working conditions, especially as legislation in some countries provides exceptions that allow for the possibility of the reduction of the applicable minimum wage for persons with disabilities.[16]

20. While social protection systems may often play a key role in partially correcting some of the labour market inequalities and meeting the needs of persons with disabilities with regard to income security, health protection and social inclusion, in some countries, persons with disabilities are not provided with sustained assistance. Most countries expanded their social protection programmes to include disability in the 1960s and the 1970s, and as of 2012-2013, national legislation in almost all countries provides social protection schemes with cash benefits for persons with disabilities. However, some countries have established only a lump-sum benefit instead of periodic cash benefits, and in many countries, such periodic benefits cover only workers in the formal economy and their families, excluding children with disabilities and leaving persons with disabilities who have not had the opportunity to contribute to social insurance for sufficiently long periods of time without benefits.[17]

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[14] Kamal Lamichhane, *Disability, Education and Employment in Developing Countries: From Charity to Investment* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[15] S. Mizonoya and S. Mitra (2012), "Is there a disability gap in employment rates in developing countries?", Fordham University, Department of Economics, Discussion Paper No. 2012-03, available at http://legacy.fordham.edu/images/academics/graduate_schools/gsas/economics/dp2012_03_Mizonoya_Mitra.pdf.

[16] International Labour Organization, *Minimum wage systems*, International Labour Conference, Report III (Part 1B), 103rd session *(Geneva, 2014)*, available at http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---relconf/documents/meetingdocument/wcms_235287.pdf.

[17] See International Labour Organisation, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building economic recovery, inclusive development and social justice* (Geneva, 2014).

21. Children with disabilities are less likely to start school, to attend school and to complete the full education cycle compared to their non-disabled peers.[17,18] In 2002-2003, in 51 countries, only 53 per cent of people between the ages of 18 and 49 with disabilities had completed primary education, compared to 67 per cent of those without disabilities. On average, persons with disabilities are also likely to spend fewer years in schools than persons without disabilities (usually one or two years less). As a result, adults with disabilities typically have lower educational attainment.[17]

22. People with disabilities experience significantly greater vulnerability to secondary health conditions, comorbid conditions, age-related conditions and higher rates of premature death.[19,20] Although persons with disabilities have more health-care needs compared to people without disabilities, they are more often unsuccessful in getting care when needed. In a study in 51 countries, persons with disabilities were 20 per cent less likely to be able to afford health care. People with disabilities were also more likely to be unable to afford transportation to medical facilities or to have no means of transport to reach health-care locations. In addition, people with disabilities have more difficulties in finding health-care providers with accessible equipment and adequate skills.[17]

23. Limited data are available on access to water and sanitation by persons with disabilities, but a 2011 review[21] highlighted a number of barriers that could leave persons with disabilities at a higher risk of lacking access to these basic services. These barriers arise from obstacles in the built environment, geographical conditions and social and institutional factors.[22]

24. Compared to the general population, persons with disabilities face higher risks and are disproportionately affected by conflicts, disasters and other humanitarian crises. They often face lack of accessible information and communication in early warning and disaster responses. During conflict or in the aftermath of a disaster, they experience greater exclusion in evacuation and in access to food, water, sanitation and other shelter and relief services.[23] In many disaster situations, the mortality rate of persons with disabilities is two to four times higher than that of the

[18] Deon Filmer, "Disability, Poverty, and Schooling in Developing Countries: Results from 14 Household Surveys", *World Bank Economic Review*, vol. 22, No. 1 (January 2008).

[19] Disability Rights Commission, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, "Equal treatment: closing the gap: a formal investigation into the physical health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities and/or mental health problems" (London, Disability Rights Commission, 2006).

[20] Andrew Nocon, "Equal treatment: Closing the Gap: Background evidence for the DRC's formal investigation into health inequalities experienced by people with learning disabilities or mental health problems" (Disability Rights Commission, United Kingdom, 2006), available at http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/nocon-Evidence-paper-2006.pdf.

[21] N. Groce, N. Bailey, R. Lang, J. F. Trani and M. Kett, "Water and sanitation issues for persons with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries: a literature review and discussion of implications for global health and international development", *Journal of Water and Health*, vol. 9, No. 4, 2011.

[22] H. Jones and B. Reed, *Water and sanitation for disabled people and other vulnerable groups: Designing services to improve accessibility* (Water, Engineering and Development Centre, Loughborough University, United Kingdom, 2005).

[23] See A/65/173.

persons without disabilities.[25] A survey of more than 5,000 persons with disabilities in 137 countries in 2013 showed that most persons with disabilities had no personal preparedness plan for disasters and few were aware of a disaster management plan in their community. Most persons with disabilities indicated that they would have difficulties to evacuate immediately in the event of a sudden disaster.[25]

25. Lack of accessible physical and virtual environments remains one of the main obstacles for the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in development. The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) took a major step in 2011 by setting international standards for the built environment, reflecting aspects of accessibility in buildings to enable all persons, regardless of disability, to reach, enter, use and safely evacuate a building independently. Furthermore, various countries have produced legislation requiring accessibility to the physical environment. Nevertheless, physical barriers remain even in countries with such legislation. In many countries, the degree to which physical spaces have been made accessible is unknown. Existing studies of public buildings in selected European countries suggest that physical accessibility is far from universal.[26]

26. Accessibility of virtual environments is becoming increasingly important as information and communication technologies, such as web services, mobile devices, television and computers, become ever essential for daily participation in work, education and in social and cultural spheres. Computers and the Internet also can decrease the sense of isolation for persons with disabilities, who may be homebound or have limited mobility. ISO standards for web accessibility exist and e-accessibility checker software has been developed to assist those who wish to verify if their websites satisfy the ISO accessibility criteria. Despite the existence of these standards, the large majority of websites do not comply with them, including governmental websites.[27]

IV. Review and follow-up mechanisms for disability-inclusion in development

27. Within the United Nations system, various review and follow-up processes and mechanisms exist for assessing the implementation of human rights and

[24] Rehabilitation International, the Nippon Foundation and ESCAP, "Sendai Statement to Promote Disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilient, Inclusive and equitable Societies in Asia and the Pacific" (24 April 2014), available at http://www.riglobal.org/sendai-statement-to-promote-disability-inclusive-disaster-risk-reduction-for-resilient-inclusive-and-equitable-societies-in-asia-and-the-pacific/.

[25] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, *Living with Disability and Disasters: United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction 2013 Survey on Living with Disabilities and Disasters — Key Findings*, 2014, available from http://www.unisdr.org/2014/iddr/documents/2013DisabilitySurveyReport_030714.pdf.

[26] Accessible public buildings indicators on political participation of persons with disabilities (2014), available at http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/comparative-data/political-participation/accessible-buildings.

[27] *United Nations E-Government Survey 2014: E-Government for the Future We Want*, available at http://unpan3.un.org/egovkb/Portals/egovkb/Documents/un/2014-Survey/E-Gov_Complete_Survey-2014.pdf.

development frameworks for persons with disabilities. These mechanisms and processes are described below.

28. The implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been reviewed and followed up by the General Assembly, which has regularly requested that the Secretary-General submit reports on their implementation. The World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons envisaged that the United Nations system would carry out a periodic evaluation of progress made in implementing the Programme. This has prompted the General Assembly, since 1982, to request the Secretary-General to submit regular reports on issues related to the inclusion of disability. In 1993, following the adoption of the Standard Rule, Member States requested the Secretary-General to report biennially to the Assembly on the progress of efforts to ensure the equalization of opportunities and full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the various bodies of the United Nations system. After the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by the Assembly in 2006, it has regularly requested the Secretary-General to submit reports on the status of the Convention and its Optional Protocol.

29. The Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities were both established to monitor the implementation of the Convention. Article 40 of the Convention stipulates, "The States Parties shall meet regularly in a Conference of States Parties in order to consider any matter with regard to the implementation of the present Convention". Since 2008, nine sessions of the Conference of States Parties have been held. At these sessions, the States parties considered themes related to disability-inclusive development and the implementation of the Convention and provided a forum for the sharing of best practices. Panels and interactive dialogues have been organized on topics such as accessibility and reasonable accommodation; community-based rehabilitation; technology; women, children and youth with disabilities; reducing inequalities for persons with disabilities; social protection and poverty reduction strategies; addressing the vulnerability and exclusion of persons with disabilities in disasters and humanitarian crises; promoting the rights of persons with mental and intellectual disabilities; disability data and statistics; using the Convention as an instrument for achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and, most recently, for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

30. Article 34 to 39 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities established the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as well as its functions. The Committee is a body comprising 18 independent experts, which monitors implementation of the Convention. All States parties have to submit regular reports to the Committee on implementation of the rights enshrined in the Convention. The Committee examines each report and makes suggestions and general recommendations on the report. As of November 2015, the Committee has received reports from 95 State parties. The Optional Protocol to the Convention (see General Assembly resolution 61/106), which entered into force at the same time as the Convention, establishes two additional mandates for the Committee: (a) the receipt and examination of individual complaints; (b) the undertaking of inquiries in the case of reliable evidence of grave and systematic violations of the Convention.

The Committee normally holds two sessions per year. According to the Convention, the Committee is to report on its activities to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council every two years. The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on the examination of reports and information received from the States parties.

31. Regarding the internationally agreed development goals, since 2007, the General Assembly has regularly reviewed progress in the implementation of the goals for persons with disabilities based on reports prepared by the Secretary-General. In addition, the Assembly has asked the Secretary-General, in coordination with United Nations agencies, to submit a flagship report by 2018.[28] The report is expected to reflect progress made in addressing the relevant internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

32. The Human Rights Council has also been playing a role in reviewing and following up on the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities, specifically based on the report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to the Council. The Special Rapporteur also submits reports to the General Assembly. These annual reports present the activities undertaken in fulfilling the mandate of the Special Rapporteur and include thematic studies on key issues related to the advancement of the rights of persons with disabilities. Previous reports have discussed social protection and participation in decision making for persons with disabilities. The Special Rapporteur was appointed by the Human Rights Council in 2014 for a period of three years and was mandated, inter alia, to: (a) make concrete recommendations on how to better promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities, including on how to promote development that is inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities; (b) conduct, facilitate and support the provision of technical assistance, capacity-building and international cooperation in support of national efforts for the effective realization of the rights of persons with disabilities; and (c) raise awareness of the rights of persons with disabilities.[29] To fulfil this mandate, the Special Rapporteur gathers, requests, receives and exchanges information and communications from and with States and other relevant sources, including persons with disabilities and their representative organizations and other civil society organizations, on violations of the rights of persons with disabilities; and conducts country visits at the invitation of Governments.

33. The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development prompted additional attention to disability-inclusion in follow-up and review processes at national and international levels. The Agenda establishes that the follow-up and review processes at national, regional and global levels should be guided by data that is disaggregated by disability and encourages Member States to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels, which are country-led and country-driven. These national reviews serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the high-level political forum, which meets under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. These reviews are voluntary, State-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries and involve multiple stakeholders. In 2016, the high-level political forum received 22 reviews, 15 of which included information

[28] General Assembly resolution 69/142.

[29] Human Rights Council resolution 26/20.

on disability issues. Guidelines on how to reflect disability in national monitoring reviews do not exist, but they could be beneficial in guiding countries on how to present progress towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities.

34. The report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, submitted to the high-level political forum, presents data on the individual Goal indicators. The first report, submitted in 2016, did not include any data on disability. Capacity-building at the country level and compilation of disability data at the international level are needed to ensure that the report can present progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities.

35. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda encouraged the Secretary-General to convene an Inter-Agency Task Force to report annually on progress in implementing the financing for development outcomes and the means of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. It specified that the Task Force would advise intergovernmental follow-up on progress, including implementation gaps, and make recommendations for corrective action. The first report of the Task Force, released in 2016, identifies disability data and indicators, which could be used to monitor the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

36. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 calls upon the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the Framework by preparing periodic reviews on progress, in particular for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. As part of the review and follow-up process of the Sendai framework, in 2015 the General Assembly established an open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction to develop indicators to measure global progress on the Framework's seven agreed targets.[10] The group should conclude its work by December 2016. If the indicators do not explicitly refer to persons with disabilities, do not reflect the needs and perspectives of persons with disabilities and do not ask for data disaggregated by disability, the review and follow-up of progress made with regard to the Sendai Framework for persons with disabilities will lack basic evidence. The Assembly also decided to give due consideration to the review of global progress in the implementation of the Sendai Framework as part of the integrated and coordinated follow-up processes to United Nations conferences and summits. In particular, this review is to be aligned with the Economic and Social Council, the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the quadrennial comprehensive policy review cycles, as appropriate, taking into account the contributions of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction and the updated monitoring tool based on the Hyogo Framework for Action Monitor. The next Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the first Platform to consider a review of progress, will take place in Mexico in 2017.

37. The review and follow-up of progress made in advancing and implementing the achievements of the World Humanitarian Summit are yet to be established. The report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the Summit, submitted to the

[10] General Assembly resolution 69/284.

seventy-first session of the General Assembly, proposes a way to assess progress over time for the consideration of the Member States.[31] There are no specific suggestions to review and follow up of progress made for persons with disabilities.

38. The inclusion of persons with disabilities in existing review processes and mechanisms is not always explicit, and needs to be further explored. The review and follow-up mechanisms of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda include disability indicators for persons with disabilities, but thus far no disability indicators have been included in other frameworks. In addition, although most frameworks ask for data disaggregated by disability, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the Charter on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, data disaggregation is just one aspect of review and follow-up. Once disability-disaggregated data are gathered, an assessment of progress is required, based on these data and other relevant evidence, and reported either in mandated reports or to the relevant forums. If review and follow-up mechanisms do not explicitly include persons with disabilities in all steps of the process, there is a risk that this group will be left behind. To avoid this, it would be beneficial to have guidelines and recommendations on how disability will be fully reviewed and followed up in the 2030 Agenda and other new development instruments.

V. Work of the Commission for Social Development for the advancement of persons with disabilities in development

39. The Standard Rules for the Equalization of Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities was the first framework to provide for a monitoring role for the Commission for Social Development on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in social and economic development. The Standard Rules established the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, an independent and active monitoring mechanism within the United Nations.[32] Under the Standard Rules, the Special Rapporteur reported on an annual basis to the Commission, taking into consideration the economic, social and cultural features of individual Member States. The reports presented findings on the promotion and monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules and presented recommendations, as requested by the Commission, on their further development and implementation. In carrying out his/her functions, the Special Rapporteur established direct dialogue with Member States and with local non-governmental organizations and experts, seeking their views and comments on any information intended to be included in the reports. Under the Standard Rules a panel of experts from civil society was also created to consult with the Special Rapporteur.[33]

[31] A/71/353.

[32] General Assembly resolution 48/96, annex, sect. IV, para 1.

[33] Three Special Rapporteurs on Disability have been appointed since the adoption of the Standard Rules. The first Special Rapporteur, Mr. Bengt Lindqvist (Sweden), was appointed in March 1994 and served through to December 2002. The second Special Rapporteur, Ms. Sheikha Hessa Al-Thani (Qatar), served for two terms from January 2002 to June 2009. The third Special Rapporteur, Mr. Shuaib Chalklen (South Africa), was initially appointed in August 2009. After his mandate was extended by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2011/27, he served a second term from 2011 until 2014.

40. The role and mandate of the Special Rapporteur evolved over time in response to emerging demands. The Standard Rules required the Special Rapporteur to prepare analytical reports, establish dialogue with Member States and non-governmental organizations, to prepare questions to report on progress made in the implementation of the Standard Rules and to provide advisory services on the implementation and monitoring of the Standard Rules.

41. These functions were later expanded through Economic and Social Council resolutions 2008/26 and 2011/27, in which the Council requested the Special Rapporteur to: further advocate for the equalization of opportunities for the full enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities and for the well-being of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life; to promote awareness and ratification of the Convention;[34] and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of disability issues through international cooperation, in development programmes and in strategies at the national, regional and international levels.[35]

42. The Special Rapporteur was also requested to contribute to the high-level meeting on disability and development of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly and its preparatory process, taking into account the priorities of the international community in strengthening efforts to ensure accessibility for and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all aspects of development efforts.[36]

43. In his final report to the Commission, in 2014, the Special Rapporteur offered a number of observations and recommendations for consideration by the Commission. He observed the need to place disability higher on the agenda of the work of the United Nations system and to strengthen institutional structures for existing political processes to ensure systematic monitoring and progress within the United Nations system. He recommended that the mainstreaming of disability in all development agendas and efforts, including in the Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, "needs to be recognized as a priority, especially in the work of the United Nations, including the Commission for Social Development".[37] The Special Rapporteur further recommended that "the Commission for Social Development should consider options for establishing a standing mechanism to systematically review and monitor progress in realizing all internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities towards and beyond 2015 and to promote coordination, effective implementation and synergies among United Nations programmes".[38]

44. The Commission has also been the primary intergovernmental body responsible for following up on the Declaration and Programme of Action from the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995. The mandate includes a range of functions to advance social development for different groups, including persons with disabilities, through the sharing of comparative experiences, the identification of urgent issues and the formulation of substantive

[34] Economic and Social Council resolution 2008/20, para. 3.
[35] Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/27, para. 7.
[36] Ibid., para. 8.
[37] E/CN.5/2015/5, para. 68.
[38] Ibid., para. 70 (b).

recommendations for practical measures to assist the Economic and Social Council in carrying out its coordination functions.

45. The Commission played a significant role in facilitating the negotiation processes for the development of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by providing views from a social development perspective and from experiences in the implementation of the Standard Rules and the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. The Commission's leadership in and impact on this process is visible in the language of the resulting Convention. Notably, the Convention is both a human rights and a development instrument.

46. In recent years, the Commission has continued to evolve into an important forum for the comprehensive debate and substantive discussion of major social development issues. The Commission has used a range of mechanisms, including multi-stakeholder panel discussions. The Commission continues to be a strategic subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, with the key function of recommending action-oriented outcomes for the approval of the Council. The political visibility attached to sessions of the Commission provides an avenue to strengthen the impact of international frameworks for marginalized social groups, including persons with disabilities.

VI. Summary of the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development

47. In the context of the significant contribution of the Commission for Social Development to the advancement of the situation of persons with disabilities in development, and the recent adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, it has been recognized that the end of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission has produced a gap in consistent monitoring, review and follow-up of the situation and progress made in realizing the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. From the experience in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and their failure to include adequate measures to address the requirements of persons with disabilities, there is recognition of the need for a specific mechanism to ensure that the global commitment to leave no one behind in the implementation of all 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals is also realized for persons with disabilities.

48. At the fifty-second session of the Commission, there was a discussion of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, whose term had expired in December 2014. The Commission made no decision concerning an extension of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur. Member States were divided in their views between establishing a new mechanism outside the Commission and the Economic and Social Council and maintaining a similar system within the Commission.

49. The Commission revisited this discussion during its fifty-third session. While the Commission recognized that the term of the mandate of the Special Rapporteur had expired, it postponed making a decision on a future mechanism for monitoring of progress made for persons with disabilities in development and society until its fifty-fourth session. The Commission agreed that a mechanism was needed, and that

such a mechanism should focus on monitoring progress made by Member States in the implementation of the post-2015 development framework for persons with disabilities. The Commission therefore decided that a multi-stakeholder panel discussion would take place during the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the light of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, with the following objectives: (a) to further elaborate on how existing mechanisms and entities within the United Nations system can contribute to strengthening the mainstreaming of disability, (b) to enhance awareness and cooperation at all levels in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and (c) to consider the possibility and modalities of another monitoring mechanism.[39]

50. The multi-stakeholder panel discussion reviewed the historical evolution of disability within the United Nations system and the critical role played by the Commission in advancing the disability in the global development agenda over the past decades. The panel discussed the progressive shift in approaches to disability issues, from a social welfare perspective to a social development and human rights-based approach, and panellists commended the tremendous progress made in advancing disability in international development frameworks.

51. Panellists noted the now common understanding that social policies inclusive of persons with disabilities are sound investments in society, and that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals relies on the involvement and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all development efforts. Panellists emphasized the relationship between social development and human rights, as articulated in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, as being interlinked, indivisible and mutually reinforcing. Panellists stressed that the international community needs to incorporate a social development and human rights perspective in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to pursue a paradigm shift that places the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities at the centre of all development efforts.

52. A number of panellists outlined examples of good practices from countries and programmes to illustrate how national practices have evolved and how they can be used to inform and guide the future work of the United Nations and Member States. Panellists noted the value of sharing lessons from country-level experiences to multi-stakeholder forums to inform, shape and strengthen future actions in social development for persons with disabilities.

53. The panel also discussed the role of the Commission in supporting a coherent and cohesive approach to disability within the United Nations system, in particular in relation to monitoring and measuring progress. Panellists and participants considered existing mechanisms to advance the disability platform within the United Nations system, bearing in mind the importance of avoiding duplication. The discussion also highlighted the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations system and Member States in ensuring the successful and coherent implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

54. The discussion identified the paucity of available data and information on persons with disabilities, and the difficulties they face in gaining inclusion and participation in society and development, as significant barriers. The panellists also

[39] Economic and Social Council resolution 2015/4, para 3.

felt that the Commission could obtain political commitment and ensure greater visibility for the rights of disabled persons through an ongoing review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Panellists and discussants proposed that the Commission build on progress made by taking on a leadership role in monitoring of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for persons with disabilities. Various proposals for monitoring mechanisms within the Commission to advance the rights, perspectives and well-being of persons with disabilities in social development were put forward.

VII. Options for review and follow-up mechanisms for monitoring progress in achieving the global development goals for persons with disabilities

55. The new international development landscape demands changes in the way the Commission for Social Development monitors and follows up on internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In line with the Commission's historic role in advancing the situation of persons with disabilities in development and society, the Commission has a unique opportunity to continue its leadership in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the fulfilment of its promise to leave no one behind. This can be achieved by mainstreaming disability in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and by promoting the inclusion of disability issues, building on the work of existing mechanisms within the United Nations system. During the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability at the fifty-fourth session of the Commission, panellists and Member States put forward a number of options on the establishment of a complementary monitoring mechanism.

56. There was significant support for the establishment of an annual multi-stakeholder panel under the aegis of the Commission to discuss, share experiences and review progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for persons with disabilities. The work and discussions of the panel could be aligned with the annual themes of the high-level political forum and directly feed into the forum's dialogues. A proposal was made to create a standing forum on disability and development within the Commission or under the General Assembly. The former Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities suggested the possibility of the Economic and Social Council creating a permanent space in which United Nations agencies, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other relevant mandate holders can analyse progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, coordinate efforts to ensure coherence of approaches and support States in their reporting to the High-level Political Forum. It was also suggested by a Member State that a high-level technical panel be established to discuss the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring the participation of all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, representatives of academia, civil society organizations and local governments.[40]

VIII. Conclusions and recommendations

57. The multi-stakeholder panel discussion clearly highlighted the need to develop a mechanism to ensure monitoring and follow-up on progress made towards the

[40] Proposal of the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations.

realization of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. In view of new international frameworks for development and the absence of a mandate for a Special Rapporteur under the aegis of the Commission to review and monitor progress in the advancement of the situation of persons with disabilities in development and society, the Commission is presented with an opportunity to build on its leadership in promoting disability-inclusive development.

58. Various mechanisms exist within the United Nations system to follow up on and support the realization of the rights and internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities. However, there is space to strengthen the coordination of these mechanisms and focus attention on the review, follow-up and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other new development frameworks, including the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda or the New Urban Agenda.

59. During its fifty-fourth session, the Commission held a panel discussion to discuss possible future mechanisms to continue its leadership in advancing the rights, well-being and perspectives of persons with disabilities in development. Some options for consideration by the Commission have been proposed.

60. In view of the above, the following recommendations on realizing the internationally agreed development goals for persons with disabilities may be considered for action:

(a) **Member States should give due consideration to the proposals put forth in the multi-stakeholder panel discussion on disability held during the fifty-fourth session for the Commission for Social Development, including the proposed possibilities and modalities of another monitoring mechanism to support the work of the Commission and the Economic and Social Council in the monitoring, review and follow-up of the operationalization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other internationally agreed development goals with and for persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Governments and other stakeholders should take concrete steps to include persons with disabilities and their well-being and perspectives in policies and programmes for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals;**

(c) **Governments are urged to consistently collect and report on data concerning the situation of persons with disabilities in all follow-up and review processes related to the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals;**

(d) **Accessibility should be defined as an essential public good that is fundamental in all development policies and programmes and as both a means and goal of sustainable development;**

(e) **Governments, development agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders should recognize persons with disabilities as both beneficiaries and agents of change in all areas of development cooperation, including in disaster risk reduction, emergencies and humanitarian responses and urban development.**